19: Marshall M-S (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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a vine-clad tree, which was called "pu la." Wanderers of other nationalities, happening to discover such trees, dispoiled them of their treasure by cutting the vines. Thus, but very few "pu la" remain.

Dr. Mason tells us that "Karen boys and maidens engaged in harvesting these leaves with great zest and it was not uncommon for young men, in seeking companions to inquire who were the most agile climbers of 'pu la' or betel leaf trees." [4]

The Karen in Toungoo have always raised more or less silk and woven the material for their best garments from it. The silk-worms are of a native variety and spin a thread far inferior to that of improved species. Not many years ago the attempt was made to introduce a worm of larger size, but it met with ill success, because the creature made a peculiar creaking sound in chewing the leaves of the mulberry tree. The superstitious people thought the new worms were possessed of some strange demon and killed them, in order to ward off an unknown danger.

Many of the inhabitants of Karenni gather stick-lac, which is the deposit of an insect on certain trees found in the jungle. They also increase the supply by attaching the insects to other trees. The deposit is used extensively in making red dyes [5] and is marketed in Toungoo on the twigs to which it is attached.

The Karen is skilled in all jungle-craft. He knows the woods and what may be found there. He has learned, among other things, that bees establish their hives high up in the branches of the oil-tree *(Dipterocarpus lociis)*. When he finds a new hive he marks the tree by putting a tuft of grass at its foot. Others will recognize the mark and respect his claim. To climb the fifty or seventy-five feet to the lower branches of these giant trees is no easy task. However, it is accomplished by means of pegs driven into the trunk and a rope encircling it. Often a honey-gatherer makes his ascent at night, lest he grow dizzy in looking down from such a height. Once at the hive, he smokes the bees out with a smudge and collects the honey into joints of large bamboo. The Karen villagers in the vicinity of Thandaung used to be called "Wild Bees" by the Burmans of Toungoo, on account of the supplies of honey which they brought in from their hills.

Besides the pursuits already mentioned, the Karen of the hills sometimes engage in other occupations, such as transporting pro-

[4] *British Burma, Its People and Productions*, p. 498.
[5] See page 116.

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283 found all over Burma. This contrivance is of the simplest form, consisting of a driving-wheel about two feet in diameter with spokes and rim of bamboo, the axle of which is fitted in an ornamental flat post rising from one corner of a thick bottom board, which is three and a half feet long and a foot or more wide. Near the middle of the other end of this board a shorter post rises, to the base of which is affixed a little wheel, with a grooved rim, in line with the driving-wheel, the two wheels being connected by a slender belt. There is a handle on the large wheel and a horizontal iron spindle fastened in the center of the little one. The spinner sits on the floor, with her machine drawn up to her knees in front of her, the driving-wheel at her left hand and the point of the spindle at her right. She attaches some fibers of a roll to a spun thread tied to the spindle, and sets this to rotating rapidly by turning the large wheel with her left hand, meantime continuing to pay out the fibers from the roll with her right hand. After the spindle has twisted the loose filaments into a tight yarn, the spinner feeds the newly spun yarn on to the spindle and repeats the process with another roll of fibers, until the spindle is full.

II. Dyeing and Weaving

386 The next stage in the work is that of dyeing. The colors imparted to the skeins of cotton yarn are shades of blue to black, red, and yellow. In producing the blue shades the skeins are soaked in a solution of the bark or leaves of the wild indigo plant, called "naw xaw" in Karen, the depth of the color depending on the duration and repetition of the soaking, until a blue black has been obtained. The red dyes are derived from the stick-lac so commonly found in the Toungoo Hills. During the years just preceding the World War a good deal of foreign dyestuff was introduced among the Karen people, and yellow came to be used in addition to the other colors.[2]

286 The weaving of the yarn into cloth comes next in order. The threads that are to form the warp of the cloth must first be got ready for the hand-loom ("hta"). This is done by unwinding the skeins and stringing the thread around a few pegs driven into a leveled and cleaned space of ground, until enough has been laid down to fill the loom. If there is no convenient place out-of-doors for this purpose, the long threads are strung on pegs around the

[2] For an account of dyes and methods of dyeing in Burma, see *The Upper Burma Gazetteer*, Vol. II, Pt. I, 357-359.